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## Educational Writings

### I. REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

*The Virginia state survey.*—The general volume<sup>1</sup> reporting the findings of the survey commission which made a study of the educational system of Virginia last spring contains the recommendations of the survey commission and the findings of the experts who made the examination. This general volume is to be followed by another in which the details of the psychological tests made in the state will be reported. For the latter enterprise the General Education Board made a special appropriation.

The separation of these two groups of facts into two volumes is due to the effort to appeal to two entirely different constituencies. The tests are of value to students of the science of education rather than to the people of Virginia. The first volume is written so as to appeal directly to the citizens of Virginia and to explain to them the necessity for a revision of their constitution and statutes on the educational system.

Each chapter of the report is organized in such a way as to lead directly to suggestions for a revision in the statutes of the state. The facts on which the recommendations are based are briefly summarized. For example, we may take as a typical chapter the third, which deals with "School Population, Enrolment and Attendance." The first three pages of this chapter discuss the school population and the laws relating to enumeration. The next division deals with the school enrolment of Virginia as exhibited in the last census and compares the figures of this census with the earlier census figures. Matters of average attendance are then reported in full and made clear by the use of a diagram. The law on compulsory attendance is reviewed and its defects are pointed out. A comparison is made between Virginia and other states in this respect. Finally, the chapter closes with a series of recommendations regarding the proper statutes which would improve the situation. In the middle of the chapter appears an insert with some pictures showing the difficulties of maintaining a high average attendance in the schools of Virginia.

This general form of treatment is typical of all of the chapters. The usual facts which have entered into state surveys are summarized in the fashion indicated.

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<sup>1</sup> *Virginia Public Schools: Education Commission's Report.* Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Education Commission, 1919. Pp. 400.

The introductory chapter takes up the general social and economic conditions of the state. The length of the school year, the character of the enrolment and attendance, the progress of pupils through the schools, and the elementary-school program are described in later chapters. The results of instruction are measured by the tests which are now familiar, and tabulations are made of the experience and training of the teachers. These chapters are followed by a discussion of the normal-school facilities provided by the state and the requirements which are enforced for the certification of teachers. Secondary education and certain special subjects of education are then taken up. There is an examination of the school buildings and of the general forms of administrative organization throughout the state. There is a full discussion of the financial situation both in the state at large and in typical communities.

The descriptive exposition thus briefly outlined covers 285 pages. There then follow over 100 pages of tables. These tables supplement the figures and briefer tables which are incorporated into the text. There is some justification for putting the tables in a state survey into an appendix. It is probably true that the ordinary reader does not care to make a careful study of the figures presented in the tables. On the other hand, the removal of the tables to this part of the volume undoubtedly reduces very much the impressiveness of the facts that are there brought together. The reader has difficulty in turning constantly from one part of the book to the other in order to note the detailed facts which have been in the hands of the surveyors at the time of their making the recommendations.

The details of the survey cannot, of course, be taken up in a brief review of this sort, but it is evident to the reader who goes through this volume that the surveyors have been able to determine with a good deal of assurance the points at which the school system needs to be improved. The present constitution and statutes of the state were drawn up in a period when scientific information about the demands of education and the success of school operations could not be stated with anything like the degree of certainty that is now possible.

One selection in the chapter on the measurements of results is perhaps as typical as any statement in the volume of the way in which the survey has been carried out and of the assurance with which the authors are prepared to state their results. The selection is as follows:

"With these preliminaries out of the way the problems raised in the first paragraph of this chapter may now be restated. Is the product of the public schools of Virginia as good as it ought to be? Are the children of Virginia parents getting as good an education as they are entitled to receive? In how far do the children of Virginia equal, exceed, or fall short of the scores made by children in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Iowa and other states? Do the Virginia pupils equal the standard of achievement set by the authors of the tests as valid for the several grades?

"A single answer to these questions is difficult because standard scores are not as widely available as helpful comparison demands. In particular there are few such scores at hand for southern states where social and economic conditions most nearly approximate those of Virginia. Further, there are practically no available scores for rural schools of the type examined in this survey. It is possible, however,

to compare the different types of Virginia rural schools with each other and with the Virginia city schools, and to compare the city schools of Virginia with numerous city schools throughout the country." [Page 117.]

One of the special problems which presents itself in Virginia and is clearly stated in this survey is the problem of negro education. Something of the character and magnitude of this problem can be gathered from the following brief statements extracted from chapter xiii:

"Negroes constitute nearly one-third of the total population in Virginia. According to the latest federal census there were 671,076 negroes in the state in 1910. Likewise the colored school population is approximately one-third of the total school population, there being 222,258 colored children of school age at the time of the latest school census in 1915." [Page 197.]

"The education of a group composing nearly one-third of the total population of the state necessarily has an important economic bearing. It is a well accepted principle that the wealth of any country or community is more dependent upon the character, skill and general intelligence of its workers than upon mere natural advantages. The cities are realizing that the negro is the backbone of the labor supply in many industries which are vital to their prosperity and growth, and they are showing increasing concern over the housing, recreation and school facilities of the colored people, for good wages alone will not make a contented and efficient working population. Industrial plants that have given their colored workers a better chance have found themselves repaid in quality of output, in loyalty and steadiness of their employees." [Page 197.]

"The northern cities are now bidding for Negro labor, and the superior school advantages they offer have something to do with the general migration. Better school facilities would go a long way in encouraging the colored people to remain in the South." [Page 198.]

"Few high schools are provided for colored children. In the entire state there are only three colored high schools accredited for four grades of standard work—the Armstrong High School, Richmond, the Booker T. Washington High School of Norfolk city, and the Mt. Hermon High School of Norfolk county." [Page 200.]

"In 1917-18 non-city schools for colored children were open on the average of six months, while white schools of the same class were open on the average more than seven months." [Page 201.]

"Less than two-thirds of the colored children 'of school age' are enrolled in school. Three-quarters of the white children 'of school age' are enrolled." [Page 202.]

"Colored pupils begin to leave school in large numbers after four *years* (not four *grades*) of school attendance. Certainly not more than fifty per cent attend school for more than seven *years* (not seven *grades*)." [Page 203.]

"The inadequate qualifications of colored teachers are also shown by the certificates which they hold. Of 923 colored teachers whose certificates were examined, more than one-fifth held local permits, more than one-quarter Second Grade Certificates, nearly one-fifth First Grade Certificates—in all two-thirds holding certificates indicating very unsatisfactory qualifications—while only three per cent held 'professional' certificates." [Page 204.]

"The character of the school buildings and of the school equipment provided for colored children is too well known to the people of Virginia to require detailed description. Well planned, well built, and even fairly well equipped buildings are very much the exception—many cities even providing wretched buildings for their colored children." [Page 206.]

The present reviewer has attempted to compare the tables presented in the last hundred pages of the volume with the statistics that are given in the Report of the Commissioner of Education of the United States and has checked several of the tables against each other with the result that the figures seem to be reliable and entirely consistent.

On the whole, the survey can be described as very thoroughly and carefully carried out, and the suggestions made to the state with regard to new legislation ought to produce a very wholesome effect. The commission which finally drafted the recommendations to the legislature is made up of influential citizens of Virginia, and there is said to be very large promise of a thoroughgoing reform in the schools of Virginia in response to the demands of the survey.

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*Practical psychology.*—One of the best books that has appeared in recent years on the psychology of school work is the book prepared by Professor Woodrow of the University of Minnesota, entitled *Brightness and Dullness in Children*.<sup>1</sup> Professor Woodrow has brought together in this book a general summary of the results of much of the work that has been done in the measurement of general intelligence. He has made the work of Professor Terman and other students of tests available to the general reader, especially the school administrator who is not likely to go through the details of the earlier books written by those who have worked out the testing movement.

To this summary of earlier results Professor Woodrow has added a critical estimate of the value of the different units of measurement employed and of the results secured by their application. A large amount of useful material is thus presented in a relatively small compass, and the reader will be made acquainted with the larger problems of classification of pupils in a thoroughly scientific way.

Especially significant is the emphasis laid by Professor Woodrow on the importance of recognizing the fact that there are many children in the public schools who are enough above the average to deserve separate attention in the development of our school plans. For want of a better word, as he puts it, he has used the word "brightness" to indicate all degrees of intellectual competency. The very fact that he has been able to lay down a general principle and point out its importance makes it easier for him to advocate appropriate treatment of children of every grade of intelligence. The book is therefore not a treatise on abnormality or intellectual defects. It is rather a discussion of the possibilities of adapting education to individual variations.

Before turning to a brief reference to one or two of the important topics discussed, it may be well to point out a defect in literary style which Professor Woodrow and the editor of the series have allowed themselves to perpetrate in this

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<sup>1</sup> HERBERT WOODROW, *Brightness and Dullness in Children*. Lippincott's Educational Guides, edited by W. F. Russell. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1919. Pp. 322.